

## EPA, DNR Respond to Petition, Letters

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Factors related to cost, short-term effectiveness and implementability are the main reasons why Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will not amend their December 2002 cleanup decision.

The two agencies reviewed vitrification over dredging and landfilling for sediment from Little Lake Butte des Morts after receiving a petition from Winnebago County and the towns of Vinland, Nekimi, Clayton, Oshkosh, Neenah, Winneconne and Winchester, and about 150 citizen requests. In a written response, EPA and DNR explained why changing the disposal technique from landfilling to vitrification would not be done. One reason is the length of time that would be needed to get a vitrification system up and running. Because a full-scale vitrification facility does not exist, nor has one been designed, a location to build one would have to be found and all necessary state and local permits obtained beforehand. On the contrary, finding a landfill that would handle PCB-contaminated sediment would take much less time since many such landfills already exist in the Fox Valley.

According to EPA Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg, "After the time needed to obtain the proper permits, it would probably take at least three more years to implement vitrification."

Although it was originally believed that vitrification could be cheaper than dredging and landfilling, revised estimates place the cost of vitrification at about \$30 million more than originally anticipated. While EPA and DNR had to assume how much the vitrification option would cost when developing their list of cleanup options, which considered many types of technologies, a closer look proved otherwise. The cost of \$63.6 million for vitrification was underestimated because a technology requiring the use of large settling lagoons (passive dewatering) was originally included. In their recent review, EPA and DNR learned that this technology would be impractical at Little Lake Butte des Morts because of space limitations and a lack of suitable land.

"These lagoons would each require nine acres of land," Hahnenberg added. "That is space which is not available in the area adjacent to Little Lake Butte des Morts."

### Agencies to Set Meeting, Comment Period

DNR and EPA will schedule a comment period and public meeting in or near the town of Vinland on the proposed use of Georgia-Pacific's landfill to dispose of PCB-contaminated sediment from Little Lake Butte des Morts. This will be done after the company's permit application has been received by DNR and deemed complete. At press time, the meeting date and place had not been announced.

Using a different type of technology (mechanical dewatering), which uses large presses to squeeze the water out of the contaminated sediment prior to vitrification, would add nearly \$14 million to vitrification costs. Also, the estimated cost of vitrification alone needed to be revised from \$32 to \$55.9 million. This conclusion was supported in a May 2003 report, "Revised Unit Cost Study, for Commercial-

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*The Fox River Current will continue to feature updates on cleanup and restoration activities that are planned or ongoing.*

# Technical Update . . .

## Lake Work Still in Early Stages

By Greg Swanson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

### Little Lake Butte des Morts

- Preliminary design work is continuing for the cleanup of Little Lake Butte des Morts, also known as Operable Unit 1. The emphasis is on dewatering, dredging and water treatment, so work can begin as planned later this year.
- Contractors are continuing to study potential sites for on-shore equipment staging.
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the contractor for the paper companies, P.H. Glatfelter Co. and WTM I, have met with local officials to coordinate river access, increased truck traffic, water treatment operations, and all other activities related to the cleanup in the Appleton/Neenah/Menasha area.
- As requested by the town of Vinland and other local officials, DNR and EPA have reviewed vitrification as a possible disposal option for OU 1. When that process was completed, a response to their petition was sent to them. The written response will also become part of the site's administrative record. (See story on Page 1.)
- A study identifying the areas that might be disturbed in the cleanup of OU 1 has been completed as part of a Cultural Resources Survey as detailed in an article in the November/December 2003 *Fox River Current*.
- Additional information on the physical characteristics of the river bottom will be collected in March and April, as soon as weather permits.



*This pontoon boat was used to measure the various depths of Little Lake Butte des Morts last fall.*

### Remaining three sections of the river and Green Bay

- Preliminary design work continued under an agreement signed with Georgia-Pacific in January 2003 for the remainder of the river and Green Bay, also known as Operable Units 2-5. This work includes developing detailed engineering plans for downriver work from Little Rapids to Green Bay and developing long-term monitoring plans.
- Negotiations continued with the paper companies, Georgia-Pacific and NCR Corp., on further cleanup settlements for these sections of the river and Green Bay.

*See Technical Update, Page 3*

# EPA Attorney Retires

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

After 28 years with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Roger Grimes has retired. In December 2003, Grimes, who had worked on the Lower Fox River project since the mid 1990s announced that he would be ending his public service career.

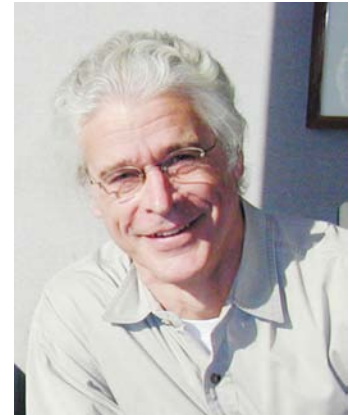
In addition to the Lower Fox River, Grimes, 55, worked on two Superfund projects in Janesville, Wis., another in Michigan and lectured on bankruptcy topics.

The Chicago resident said he plans to spend more time with his wife and three teenage children at home and on their Iowa farm.

Peter Felitti replaces Grimes as EPA's attorney. Felitti, a 12-year EPA veteran, worked behind the scenes with Grimes on Lower Fox River issues over the past few years.

In addition, he has worked on the complex sediment cleanup at the Fields Brook Superfund site in Ohio as well as on projects in Illinois, Indiana and Michigan.

Felitti can be reached at (312) 886-5114, (800) 621-8431, Ext. 65114; felitti.peter@epa.gov.



*Roger Grimes*

## **Vinland** from Page 1

Scale Sediment Melter Facility, Glass Furnace Technology," referenced in the petition and eventually used by the agencies in their review of the cleanup options.

Before a cleanup option can be recommended, it must be evaluated for "implementability." In other words, EPA and DNR needed to know how difficult it may be to actually "do" this cleanup. Vitrification has only been pilot tested and has not yet been applied to a large-scale project. Since vitrification has no proven track record to show how practical or cost effective it may be for Little Lake Butte des Morts, the agencies are reluctant to use vitrification alone. They may be willing to use vitrification of dredged sediment as an alternative to off-site disposal if it proves to be practical and cost effective.

"Although we believe vitrification would be effective in a PCB cleanup, we would need to know that we can actually get the permits to build and operate a vitrification facility," Hahnenberg added. "We also want to be sure that the entire project wouldn't be delayed, which can happen when using a new

technology. Additionally, we wouldn't have a funding source under present agreements or in agency budgets."

The petition and the citizen letters voiced a preference for vitrification, the burning of sediment at high temperatures and its eventual conversion into glassy granules, over dredging and landfiling. Copies of the EPA and DNR response have been sent to the five information repositories listed on Page 7 and to the Vinland Town Hall. It will also be posted on the EPA and DNR Web sites listed on Page 7.

## **Technical Update** from Page 2

### **Natural Resource Damage Assessment**

- Technical staff representing the natural resource trustees continued to discuss and prioritize proposed restoration projects to recommend to its five-member board (trustee council). (See story on Page 4.)



*The Fox River Current is featuring promising natural resource damage assessment projects in and near the Lower Fox River.*

# Spotlight On:

## Little Lake Butte des Morts West Shores Preservation Project

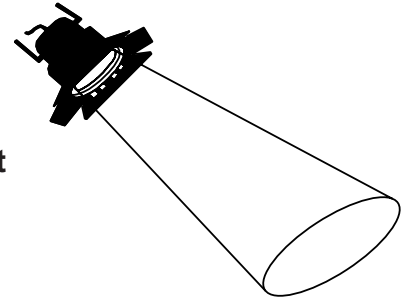
By Colette Charbonneau, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Lower Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council has been working cooperatively with a group of municipalities and nonprofit organizations to protect some of the last remaining wetlands and wildlife habitat found along the Lower Fox River.

Restoration settlement funds were recently used to acquire nearly 65 acres of land along the west shore of Little Lake Butte des Morts, including 2,600 feet of lake frontage. This area is highly urbanized and green space is at a minimum. The lands will eventually be transferred to the town of Menasha, city of Neenah and the Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust, with deed restrictions and conservation easements to preserve the lands and restrict their use for the benefit of natural resources found in and along the Fox River.

The 39 miles of the Lower Fox River are of the highest geographic priority, as outlined in the restoration plan developed by the trustee council. "The West Shore Preserves is the first restoration proposal for this high priority area to be submitted to the trustee council," stated Tom Nelson, technical representative to the trustee council for the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin.

The group proposing the restoration project included the University of Wisconsin — Fox Valley, Fox Valley Technical College, Winnebago County Land and Water Conservation Department, town of Menasha and Neenah-Menasha Breakfast Optimist Club's Optimist Paddle Center. Terry Gant, owner of a local company called Tourism Attractions Group LLC, organized the group and coordinated the proposal.



*The land known as the Rydell property is 8.5 acres of ponds, forested habitat and lake frontage adjacent to Fritse Park. Osprey and bald eagles have been seen perching in the trees on this land.*

The properties acquired from willing sellers:

- Guckenberg marsh, 27 acres of cattail/open water wetlands connecting Stroebe Island to the mainland along the south bank of Mud Creek;

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**Spotlight** from Page 4

- Halbrook family property, 8.6 acres of forested wetland on the south end of Stroebe Island;
- Knaack/Barrett property, 16.1 acres of cattail/open water wetlands adjacent to the Halbrook property;
- Dube family property, a 1.15-acre parcel with lake frontage for a potential handicapped-accessible fishing area;
- Rydell family property, 8.5 acres of ponds, forested habitat and lake frontage adjacent to Fritse Park;
- Fowler family property, 1.8 acres with lake frontage adjacent to the Rydell property;
- former Quality Oil Co. property in Neenah, which is the current site of the Optimist Paddle Center canoe and kayak rental and access point; and
- Neshek family property, one-tenth of an acre at the mouth of the Neenah Slough and adjacent to the Optimist Paddle Center property.

“The protection of this unique river habitat is very important to the health of the Little Lake Butte des Morts ecosystem,” said George Boronow, DNR Lower Fox River Basin supervisor and technical representative to the trustee council. “These areas will also provide educational opportunities for people of all ages and there will be more access to the lake for recreational opportunities.”

The lands acquired for permanent protection provide unique homes desirable for wildlife and fish. The marsh or wetland area connecting Stroebe Island to the mainland includes island habitat with backwaters, quiet cuts and coves, protective areas for feeding or resting ducks and geese, and nurseries for fish such as bluegill, bass, northern pike and walleye. These species may also feed along the edge of the wetlands that produce large numbers of aquatic insects and small fish that serve as food for larger fish. Osprey

and bald eagles have been seen perching in the trees on the Rydell property, waiting to dive for a fish meal.

Thanks to the initiative of area municipalities and organizations, the natural resources injured from the release of PCBs into the Fox River will soon begin to be restored.

The natural resource trustees are comprised of DNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oneida, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Michigan Attorney General, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For further information on NRDA projects, contact Trustee Council Coordinator Colette Charbonneau, FWS, at [Colette\\_Charbonneau@fws.gov](mailto:Colette_Charbonneau@fws.gov) or at (920) 866-1726.



## Out and About...

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership, made up of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, regularly provides speakers to organizations in the Fox Valley area. The following partners recently made presentations:

### February

- ◆ *Jim Hahnenberg*, EPA: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality staff, Lansing, MI; general Lower Fox River cleanup.



# Profile On . . . Rick Karl

## New EPA Superfund Director Looks Forward to Hard Work, More Sleep

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

It's 3 a.m. and Rick Karl is sound asleep. Karl, who was recently appointed as acting director of EPA's Superfund division in Chicago, used to get phone calls from his staff in the middle of the night alerting him to an environmental emergency that needed immediate attention. As the former chief of the emergency response branch, he was accustomed to having his sleep interrupted.

"I hope my new job will have more stability," he said. "I will definitely enjoy not getting a 3 a.m. call about a spill."

Karl, 47, will also enjoy being able to plan his day ahead of time. "As the emergency response branch chief, no two days were the same," he continued. "There wasn't a day that would go by that an activity of some kind wouldn't change my agenda for the day."

Karl, who is replacing soon-to-retire Director William Muno, realizes that being part of EPA's Lower Fox River team will be challenging, but is prepared to do his part as a senior manager. "I enjoy working with a group on a project," he stated. "I look forward to working with a well-established team."

Although senior managers typically rely on their employees to get the job done, Karl will often be asked to act as a liaison between EPA and another agency or tribe; serve as an official EPA spokesman; step in for Regional Administrator Tom Skinner; and inform the administrator, national counterparts and Washington, D.C. staff on Lower Fox River issues.



*Rick Karl*

"I need to rely on the staff, since they are the experts, to help determine what direction we are heading," he said. "I'm the message deliverer."

Having worked for EPA since graduating from Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, in 1980, Karl has had a lot of experience in delivering important messages on behalf of the Agency. His master's degree in geography/soil science and bachelor's degree in natural environmental science qualified him for several positions at EPA. He started as an inspector and permit writer in EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act office, where he oversaw hazardous waste programs in Wisconsin. He quickly moved up to RCRA enforcement chief, senior

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Superfund remedial project manager, and branch chief of two Superfund offices.

For the last 10 years, Karl has been entrenched in the emergency response program making decisions on cleanups throughout Wisconsin, including Green Bay, Appleton, Wausau, Milwaukee, and Eau Claire. Among those was the 2000 Lower Fox River demonstration project Sediment Management Unit 56/57. In addition, his program was recently charged with leading EPA's efforts related to homeland security. He advised specially trained staff on the anthrax cleanup of the Hart Senate building and post office in Washington, D.C., Sept. 11 cleanup efforts, and the shuttle recovery.

While it seems like Karl, the father of two young sons, would have his fill of government at the end of the work day, in his spare time he served as the mayor of Deer Park — the northern Chicago suburb where he resides. Because of his promotion at EPA, he recently resigned that post after seven years.

An avid fisherman (and Green Bay Packer fan), he hopes to have more time to spend at his cottage on Pleasant Lake near Coloma. "I have fished the Waushara County trout streams as well as the waters of Green Bay and Lake Winnebago," he said. "I look forward to the day when I can catch and keep fish from the Lower Fox River."

**Information Available at Local Libraries**

The Intergovernmental Partners invite the public to review technical reports, fact sheets and other documents related to the Lower Fox River cleanup at information repositories set up in the reference sections of the following local libraries. Information repositories at the public libraries in DePere, Kaukauna, Little Chute, Neenah and Wrightstown have been discontinued. However, binders containing fact sheets will be mailed to and maintained at these locations as well as at the repositories listed below.

- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton, Wis.; (920) 832-6170
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay, Wis.; (920) 448-4381, Ext. 394
- **Door County Library**, 107 S. Fourth Ave., Sturgeon Bay, Wis.; (920) 743-6578
- **Oneida Community Library**, 201 Elm St., Oneida, Wis.; (920) 869-2210
- **Oshkosh Public Library**, 106 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, Wis.; (920) 236-5200

*An administrative record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the final site cleanup plan was based, is also available for review at two DNR offices: 801 E. Walnut St., Green Bay, Wis. and 101 S. Webster St., 3rd Floor, Madison, Wis. An administrative record is also available at the EPA Record Center, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., 7th Floor, Chicago, Ill.*

**DNR Names New Liaison**

Greg Hill, chief of water quality monitoring for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, has assumed the role as remedial action coordinator for the Lower Fox River/Green Bay site. Hill, who has been with DNR for more than 20 years, succeeds Ed Lynch as his agency's liaison for this project. Hill is responsible for representing DNR in negotiation sessions, at public meetings, and on natural resource damage assessment matters. He is also available to address local organizations and answer questions from the public on Lower Fox River cleanup and NRDA projects.

Hill can be reached at (608) 267-9352, [hill.gregory@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:hill.gregory@dnr.state.wi.us).

**Check out these Web sites:**

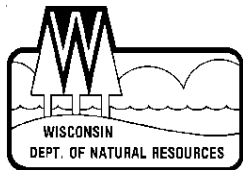
<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/lowerfox/>

<http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/foxriver/>

<http://www.fws.gov/r9dec/nrdar/nrdamain.html>

<http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/nrda/>





Prepared by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Supporting agencies include Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in these articles are solely those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by all members of the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership.

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*Fox River Current* is published bimonthly by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership. Its purpose is to provide up-to-date information about cleanup and restoration efforts on the Lower Fox River. Call Greg Swanson at (608) 264-6024 to request a subscription or alternative format. Feedback on articles and ideas for future issues are welcome. Send comments to Greg Swanson, *Fox River Current*, DNR, CE/6, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or e-mail <swansg@dnr.state.wi.us>



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